

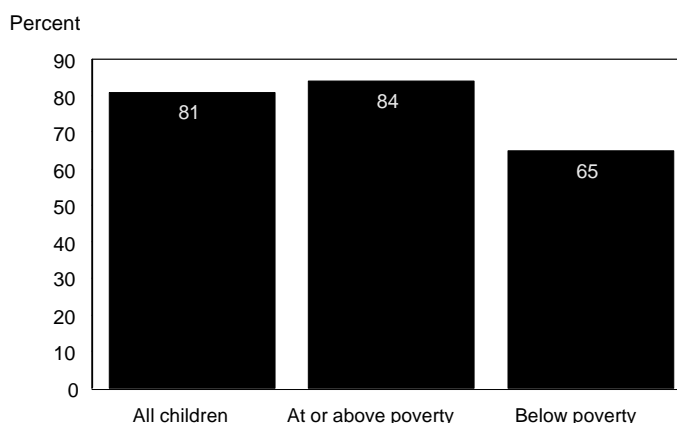
Federal Statistics: Children's Health

Children's health is key to their well-being and future development, both of which may be hindered by several factors. Children whose activities are limited by one or more chronic health conditions may need more specialized care than children without such limitations. Thus access to health care is important. Children with health insurance coverage (either public or private) are more likely than children without coverage to have access to health care. Finally, children's health and development depend on a sufficient diet and the ability of the children's households to have access at all times to enough nourishment for an active, healthy life (food security).

Most children are in very good or excellent health according to parents:

Parental reports of children's health provide one indicator of children's health status. In 1996 most children (81 percent) were reported to be in very good or excellent health. But these reports of their health status vary by household income. Sixty-five percent of children in families below the poverty line were reported to be in very good or excellent health, compared with 84 percent of children in families living at or above the poverty line.

Percentage of children under age 18 in very good or excellent health, 1996

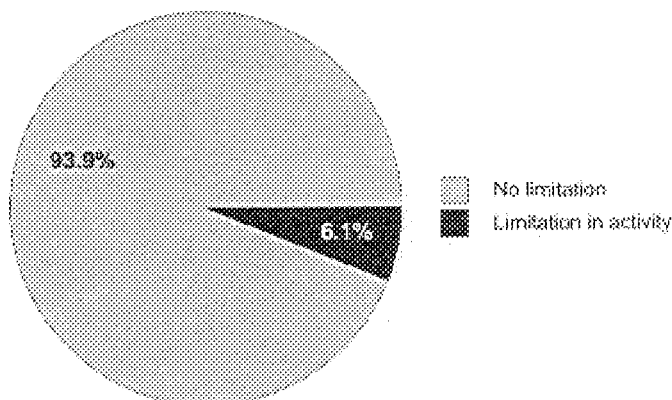


Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 1996.

Some children, though, are limited in activity because of health:

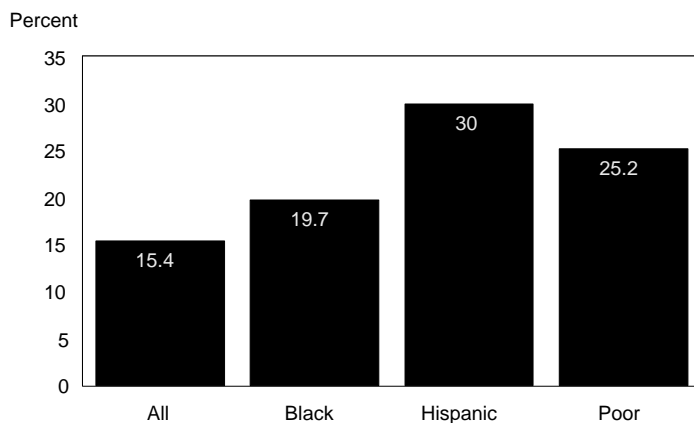
In 1996, 6.1 percent of children ages 5 to 17 had a limitation in activity resulting from chronic health conditions. These limitations, reported by the parent, are associated with chronic health conditions (e.g., asthma, hearing impairment, or diabetes) that usually last more than 3 months. Activities that were limited include going to school, playing, and any other activities of children.

Distribution of children ages 5 to 17 with any limitation in activity resulting from chronic conditions, 1996



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, 1996.

Percentage of children under age 18 without health insurance coverage, 1998

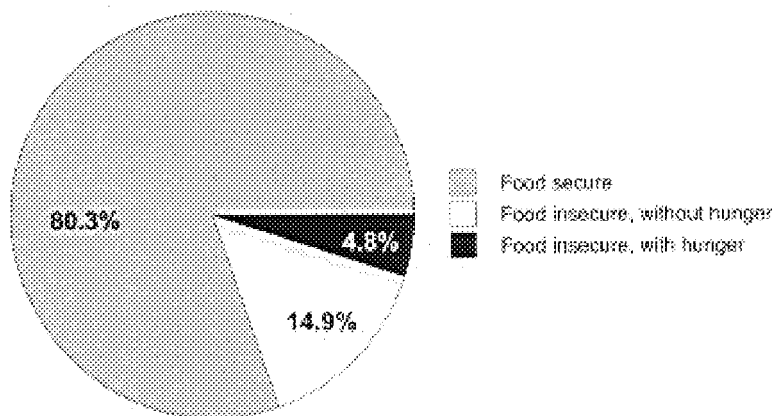


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division, Current Population Survey, 1998.

Some children are also without health insurance coverage:

Children with health insurance have a greater likelihood of obtaining medical attention to maintain their well-being. In 1998, 15.4 percent of children under age 18 were without health insurance coverage. This percentage was higher for Black children (19.7 percent), Hispanic children (30 percent) who may be of any race, and children in poor households (25.2 percent).

Distribution of children under age 18 in households experiencing food insecurity, 1998



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service and Food and Nutrition Service, 1998 Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey.

And some children are food insecure:

Food security includes the ready availability of sufficient, nutritionally adequate, and safe food and the assurance that families can obtain adequate food without relying on emergency feeding programs or resorting to desperate efforts to secure food. In 1998 most children under age 18 (80.3 percent) resided in households that were defined as food secure. However, 14.9 percent of children resided in households experiencing food insecurity without hunger, and 4.8 percent resided in households experiencing food insecurity with hunger. Food insecure households experiencing hunger report having greater difficulty obtaining food and decreased food intakes.